

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

comprising:

1. A computing device adapted to communicate via a network infrastructure,

a long-term storage device;

a user interface adapted to interact with the computing device and for launching a rendering application; and

10 a management module that receives a communication from the rendering application to access first information stored on the long-term storage device, wherein the first information is stored in an encrypted format and wherein the management module returns first data which enables the use of said first information by said rendering application.

15 2. The computing device of claim 1, wherein said first data comprises a key to
decrypt said first information.

3. The computing device of claim 1, wherein said first data includes said first information in an unencrypted format.

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4. The computing device of claim 1, wherein second information pertaining a user or a transaction is returned by the management module to the rendering application for usage on the computing device.

25 5. The computing device of claim 4, wherein said second information is
selected from the group consisting of: a name, a credit card number, and a receipt number.

6. The computing device of claim 1, wherein said management module authenticates said rendering application prior to returning said first data.

a¹ 5 7. The computing device of claim 1, wherein said management module is interfaceable with a secure repository receivable via said network infrastructure, wherein said secure repository applies a key to second data.

8 The computing device of claim 1, wherein said second data comprises a key which decrypts said first information.

10 9. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions to perform acts comprising:

authenticating software; and

providing at least one cryptographic service for said software;

wherein said computer-executable instructions to perform said at least one cryptographic service are invocable by a call from said first software.

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10. The computer-readable medium of claim 9, wherein said at least one cryptographic service comprises using a cryptographic key to decrypt data.

20 11. The computer-readable medium of claim 9, wherein said at least one cryptographic service comprises unsealing sealed data.

12. The computer-readable medium of claim 11, wherein said sealed data comprises a cryptographic key.

25 13. The computer-readable medium of claim 11, wherein said sealed data comprises information associated with the user to whom content is licensed.

14. The computer-readable medium of claim 13, wherein said information is selected from the group consisting of: a name, a credit card number, and a receipt number.

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15. The computer-readable medium of claim 9, wherein said act of providing at least one cryptographic service comprises issuing a call to a secure repository, wherein said secure repository decrypts at least some data.

16. A method of supporting a content distribution system, said method comprising the acts of:

providing, to a first entity, an interface for requesting at least one service, said interface being usable by first software;

providing, to a second entity, a set of computer-executable instructions that provide one or more services;

wherein said computer-executable instructions are invocable by way of said interface, and wherein said one or more services include enabling the use of information stored in an encrypted format.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said first entity comprises a developer of said first software.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein said first software comprises a digital content rendering application.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein said second entity comprises a consumer of said information.

20. The method of claim 16, wherein said set of computer-executable instructions comprises a COM object.

21. The method of claim 16, wherein said one or more services include decrypting said information for provision to said first software.

22. The method of claim 16, wherein said one or more services include providing to said first software a key to decrypt said information.

23. The method of claim 16, wherein said one or more services include providing to said first software a name of an authorized user of said information.

24. The method of claim 16, wherein said one or more services include unsealing at least some of said information.

25. The method of claim 16, wherein said one or more services include authenticating said first software.

26. The method of claim 16, wherein said act of providing to said first entity is performed by said first entity.

27. The method of claim 16, wherein said set of computer-executable instructions includes instructions to:

issue a call to a secure repository if said information has associated therewith a first level of protection; and

enable the use of said information without using said secure repository if said information has associated therewith a second level of protection different from said first level of protection.

28. A method of using first information stored in an encrypted format, said method comprising the acts of:

issuing a first request to provide first data which enables the use of said first information; and

if said first information is sealed with second information pertaining to an authorized user of said first information, issuing a second request to provide second data which includes said second information.

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29. The method of claim 28, wherein said second information is selected from the group consisting of: a name, a credit card number, and a receipt number.

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30. The method of claim 28, wherein said first data comprises said first information in an unencrypted format.

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31. The method of claim 28, wherein said first data comprises a key which decrypts said first information.

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32. The method of claim 28, wherein said first request is issued to an object which satisfies said requests.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein said object comprises a COM object.

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